[104 cont.]

226 751 [177 184] Never again during our visit did we come across this type of magic object, which leads us to believe that it does not belong to the Guajiro cultural whole, but that it is due rather to the influence of the mulattoes of the coast who, as is well known, are extremely superstitious.

[756 778] Charms used to call spirits. The use of these charms, to which we have referred on other occasions, is limited to shamans. They use them to facilitate the arrival of their protector spirits when they are in a curing trance or are carrying out any of the functions related to their status. Up to the present we have not arrived at a satisfactory explanation of their influence on the spirits, but we might now bring together the few data we do have. One of the female shamans who served us as informant and who [774] came from the Sierra [de] Jarara possessed charms to attract her spirits. She explained to us that as those spirits are assistants, some to young shamans, some to old ones, the charms to facilitate the arrival of their spirits are also of two classes: for young shamans and the other for old ones.

The charm is made from the leaf of a plant called in Guajiro [824] morilno, which is found in abundance on Rojoro Hill. A woman expert in such articles makes them there [105] by grinding the leaves of the plant to a paste and shaping this into a rounded form which she keeps in a small bag of red thread. The larger ones are reserved for the older shaman, and the others, combined with some of the former, are for the younger.

778 781 [325 532] The guard or guale. The guard or guale, difficult to find at present, is a kind of idol made from solid gold or silver and of which only a few examples exist as they are no longer made. This small idol is an anthropomorphic representation in fetal position, and it does not seem to be an autochthonous product of the Guajiro as they themselves assert that these idols come from their [173] distant ancestors, by which they mean the Arhuaco of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

This fetish is known sometimes by the name Mareiwa, a divinity or spirit similar to the idea of God but which appears to be nothing else than the spirit of Rain, as we shall see further ahead (cf. "Mareiwa and Wenuu").

5: Simons K-5 (ca. 1882) 1885
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An Exploration of the Goajira Peninsula, U.S. of Colombia.

By F. A. A. Simons.

Map, p. 810.

Since the publication of my last paper on the Sierra Nevada in 1881,* I have been commissioned by the National Government of Colombia to survey the two Atlantic States of the Magdalena and Bolivar, and especially to write a report on the hitherto unexplored region of the Goajira Indians. A summary of this I have now the honour of laying before the Royal Geographical Society. [121] [122]

The north-easterly corner of the United States of Colombia (formerly New Granada) terminates in a large peninsula, that, projecting for some 120 miles out into the Caribbean Sea, forms the extensive Gulf of Maracaybo. This peninsula is known as the Goajira. It was ceded by the State of Magdalena in 1872, to form a National Territory, for the better civilization of its Indians. One half of it, however, is claimed by the Venezuelans, and a dispute that at one time threatened to embroil in war between the two nations was amicably settled by referring the question to the King of Spain as arbitrator. His decision has not yet been made public. Three-fourths surrounded by sea, the Goajira is on the land, or north-westerly, side separated from the State of the Magdalena by a natural boundary, formed partly by the Rio Ranchería, with the outlying hills of the Serrada, variously called in old maps Cerros de Sabanilla, de Carrizales, &c., and partly by the Montes of Oca. [131] [175]

Very little or nothing is known of the history of these Indians. Although the peninsula played an important part in the first discoveries, none of the early chroniclers seem to have paid much attention to the country. Juan de Castellanos, who resided some time at the Cabo de la Vela, dedicates a "sole canto" to the people. The "Floresta de Santa Marta," written by José Rivadeo de la Rúa in 1739, gives many interesting [14] data on the customs and manners of the Indians; this work must have supplied the more recent writings on the subject, for the same errors run through them all. That the present race are not the original inhabitants of the peninsula is certain. The Indians themselves have [174] a legend that they came from a great distance, and are able to point out [173] traces of villages belonging to the former inhabitants, whom they assert are the Arhuacos of the Sierra Nevada. Sometimes their old graves are accidentally come across, yielding to the fortunate finder a rich harvest of stone (pieces of polished stone with a hole drilled through), curiously shaped pieces of gold, and other ornaments (shell), identical with those found in great profusion all over the Sierra Nevada. How, [172]

* Proceedings R. G. S., 1881, p. 705.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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ought not to have children. The spirits can show her various magical tricks to avoid this, but if she should become pregnant, she can count on the spirit's help in labour. Not even the male piache is allowed to partake of love more than fleetingly, almost casually. There must be no real affection involved.

A woman piache cannot practice during menstruation. No piache may eat meat from animals he has received in payment for his services. These, like other gifts, he does not enjoy, but he can give them to his sons. Nor is he allowed to eat meat from animals sacrificed at funerals or such feasts. While invoking or conjuring spirits he should restrict his diet to maize gruel.

A piache can cure all, but not himself. Sometimes, perhaps, a sympathetic spirit may give him a little advice, which will always help; but if he falls seriously ill, he summons a colleague, who performs the usual sorcery. When a piache dies, his rattle, diadem and other attributes are chopped up and buried in some remote and secret place. The dead piache's soul roams like those of all mortals and often clings to the burial place, but it is never alone, being always in company with its guardian spirit. Both can later help a new piache.

The medicine man is thus called to his profession by revelation and no attention is paid to sex, social position or age. Women have been magicians in Guajira from of old, as is shown by their myths. The piache belongs to two worlds: those of man and of the spirits. He has not chosen to belong to them and must continue in both. He is the intermediary between these two worlds, but nowadays his influence is dwindling. As civilization penetrates the peninsula, the part he plays is becoming less and less important.

The first really great piache was Umaralá, of whom the Indians relate the following:

In the olden days there were plenty of piaches who took big fees, but did little. Umaralá made his cures with secret remedies and with songs accompanied on his maraca rattle. He lost his mother early, but was adopted as her own by his maternal aunt, who also considered all her possessions his.

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She was a piache and she loved him dearly. He lived with her in the Jararí district, and he used to go with her when her profession took her on journeys, when he listened attentively to her incantations and songs.

One day Umaralá became very ill, and not only he. An epidemic spread all over Guajira, and raged worst in the Jararí Hills. He grew better at first under his aunt's cure, but then he had a relapse and grew worse and worse. He lost the power of speech, sometimes consciousness as well, and had convulsions, while his aunt perseveringly performed her magic in the hope of preventing his death. Wondering, he listened to the conversations his aunt had with a spirit during the incantations. The spirit answered her appeals with reproaches, and it was no less a spirit than Jirarai. Distinctly the lad heard him say:

'*Either you or your boy shall die.*'

The aunt realized that the situation was critical and now—unfortunately not before—she called upon Jumajule, one of the good spirits who used to help her. Unhappily Jumajule could do nothing. He was not able to drive the first spirit she had invoked from her presence. That left the aunt no choice but to deliver herself to Jirarai in order to save her dear foster-son. She laid her maraca on the boy's chest and fell down, dead.

Umaralá rose at once and, weeping, took her in his arms. With him wept the only slave to have survived the epidemic. Together they then wrapped the body in an ox-hide and took it to one of the clan's burial places, where their near relatives lay. Disillusioned and depressed by his dear aunt's death and the ravages of the epidemic among his people, Umaralá withdrew from the world, dwelling in a cabin near where his aunt lay buried and living on what wild roots and fruits he could gather. Occasionally he visited his faithful slave, whose services he had not required since his aunt's death. Each evening he went to the burial place and lit a votive fire on his aunt's grave. One evening the old woman appeared to him, looking just as she had when alive, and said to him:

'Go back to Jararí, fetch my maraca and my head-dress,

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visit the sick and treat them as I did. Only thus will you find the right way. And you must change your name. Hereafter you shall be called Umaralá.' (Before that he had been called Paurala.)

Umaralá obeyed her command. He began invoking the spirits and healing the sick and soon was renowned all over Guajira for his prowess. Once the mother of a rich family fell sick. They consulted several piaches, none of whom could cure her. In the end they decided to visit Umaralá in the Jarará Hills. Two days and two nights the emissaries had to travel till they came to the famous piache's house. There they found an old man busy spinning yarn of agave fibres. He asked them what they sought, and they replied that they had been sent to find the piache Umaralá and to ask him to look at a woman who had been very ill for a long time.

'*We are to give him a necklace of gold beads so that he* will not refuse to come and a splendid riding mule for the journey.'

'I am Umaralá,' the old man said, 'and I do not need a riding-mule, nor will I accept your necklace until I have seen and cured the sick woman. Do you ride on, I shall follow immediately. As soon as you get back home, tell them from me that everyone must leave the house where the sick woman lies and that she must be alone all night.'

The messengers returned with this message. The woman was just as ill as ever. Umaralá's instructions were carried out and the patient left by herself. At midnight the sound of horse's hooves was heard. Someone galloped up to the ill woman's house and then came the sound of singing and the rattle of a maraca. Towards morning the sound of horse's hooves was heard again. It grew fainter and fainter. The next day the woman was quite recovered and she lived on for many years.

One morning when the slave came to his master's hut he found him ready to ride off on a splendid mule. He was carefully dressed and had his maraca hanging at his saddle. The slave asked where he was going and his master replied

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that he was waiting for two men with whom he was going on a long journey. One of these was from Macuira and the other from Parashi. At that instant two horsemen appeared. Umaralá took farewell of his slave and told him that they would not meet again in this world, only in the next, and he enjoined the slave to tell no one of what he had seen or should see, otherwise he would die. The slave was left alone in the hut, sorrowful and wondering. He saw the riders disappear in the direction of the burial place that Umaralá so often visited. The slave then followed. He heard the death-lament, but saw no one. That was Umaralá bewailing his aunt with his friends. The slave returned home and soon became very ill. He told what he had heard and seen and died immediately afterwards.

The slave had noticed that the man from Parashi who had accompanied Umaralá, was dressed in deerskin. This man lived in a little hut and had the power to transform himself into a deer. Several Indians had seen and recognised him. He used to make and sell hammocks and other articles made of bast.

The man from Macuira who had been with Umaralá devoted himself to curing diseases. He used herbs and roots for some and cured others by burning the patient with a red-hot iron point. He was also a sooth-sayer and could make rain. His name was Jururiana.

Once there was a dreadful drought that made many people leave Macuira and go to the savannas. Famine came to the hills. Now people knew that Jururiana could make rain and when he came to a place called Chamato they flocked round him. In the end, in order to compel him to make rain, they tied him to a post in the sun and told him that they would not loose him until he had brought rain. This he did. After two hours, there was a big shower. The chief Juanico Epiayú was a very good friend of Jururiana and often summoned him when there was a drought, arranging dancing with much drinking and races. Jururiana then made rain.

This rain-maker vanished, none could say how. Another pretended to be Jururiana rejuvenated, but the chief sent for